



Request for City Council Committee Action from the City Coordinators Office

Date: August 8, 2011

To: Honorable Elizabeth Glidden, Chair, Regulatory, Energy & Environment Committee

Subject: Tree Advisory Committee Recommendations for Follow Up to Tree Canopy Mapping Project

Recommendation: Receive and File

Previous Directives:

- May 2, 2011: Staff direction to work with Tree Advisory Committee, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Public Works and other stakeholders to develop recommendations for policy and program changes based on the information in the Tree Canopy Mapping Project. These recommendations will be made with the overall goal of increasing tree canopy coverage throughout the City. Staff will return to the Regulatory, Energy & Environment committee with these recommendations by August 8, 2011.
- April 18, 2011: Receipt of the Tree Canopy Mapping Project report by the Regulatory, Energy and Environment Committee.

Department Information

Prepared by: Gayle Prest, Sustainability Director – 612-673-2931

Approved by:

Presenters in Committee: Gayle Prest, and Tree Advisory Committee member

Financial Impact

No financial impact.

Supporting Information

Trees are an important component of urban environments. In addition to their aesthetic value, trees have significant economic and environmental benefits, including: reducing stormwater runoff, energy conservation, improving air quality, and enhancement of community vitality, stability and property values for residential and business areas.

The University of Minnesota's Remote Sensing and Geospatial Analysis laboratory recently completed an analysis of Minneapolis' urban tree canopy. The goal of the project was to apply a standardized assessment protocol to develop an estimate of the tree canopy coverage in the city, as well as an estimate of what canopy could potentially be established. This work was funded by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Metro Greenways program. The Regulatory, Energy & Environment Committee received the report at its April 18th meeting.

The Tree Canopy Mapping Project report includes an estimate of the existing tree canopy coverage in the city, mapped by parcel and by neighborhood. The City was covered by existing tree canopies of 31.5 percent in 2009. Previous estimates of the City's canopy coverage were 26 percent.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's (MPRB) Tree Advisory Committee has spent considerable time reviewing the Report and have submitted the following recommendations (see attached letter). MPRB staff and Public Works staff are apart of the Tree Advisory Committee. A summary of the five recommendations are:

- 1) Update map after major storms such as the recent North Minneapolis tornado;
- 2) Make the GIS data easily accessible to the public;
- 3) Use the data to determine the best places to plant trees to benefit other City goals;
- 4) Conduct a targeted outreach and communications campaign to encourage tree planting;
and
- 5) Update at least every five years.